

BULLETIN 1955, No. 2

# Teaching as a Career

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# Contents

Foreword.....	Page iv
Choosing a Vocation.....	1
How Important Is Teaching?.....	1
The Education Program Is Tremendous.....	2
What Does a Teacher Do?.....	3
Different Kinds of Work in Teaching.....	3
Duties of the Nursery School and Kindergarten Teachers.....	5
Duties of the Elementary School Teachers Above Kindergarten.....	5
Duties of High-School Teachers.....	6
Duties of Administrators and Supervisors in Elementary and Secondary Schools.....	6
Duties of College and University Teachers and Administrators.....	7
What Are the Requirements for Teaching? How May I Meet Them?.....	8
Certification Requirements in Public Schools.....	8
Certification Requirements in Private Schools and in Colleges.....	9
Local Requirements.....	9
Preparing for Teaching.....	10
In-Service Education.....	10
Cost of Preparation.....	10
Scholarships for Teachers.....	11
How Can I Get Satisfactory Employment in Teaching?.....	11
Shortage and Oversupply of Teachers.....	11
Selection Procedures.....	13
Employment in Distant Places.....	13
Services of College-Placement Officers.....	13
Applications for Positions.....	14
Advancement in Teaching.....	14
What Salary Will I Receive?.....	15
Elementary and Secondary School Salaries.....	15
Salaries in Public School Teaching and Other Occupations.....	15
Administrators' Salaries.....	17
College Teachers' Salaries.....	17
What Are the Retirement Provisions for Teachers?.....	17
Will I Enjoy Teaching?.....	18
Conclusion.....	20
Sources of Additional Information.....	20



## Foreword

**C**APABLE YOUNG PEOPLE prepared for teaching will find great demand for their services in the immediate years ahead. It is almost certain that the present critical need for qualified elementary school teachers will continue for many years. In addition, the present shortages of high-school and college teachers in mathematics, science, and technical fields will, according to predictions, spread to virtually all subjects, as the large numbers of students now in the elementary schools will soon appear in high schools and later in colleges. Furthermore in 1955 the number of children of preschool age was even greater than the number then in the first six grades of school.

*Teaching as a Career* is published as a much-needed service to young men and women considering preparation for teaching. In it they will find information and judgments on duties, requirements, opportunities, satisfactions, and annoyances in teaching as a life work.

In 1944 a pamphlet entitled, *Teaching as a Profession*, written by the late Benjamin W. Frazier, was published by the Office of Education and was later reprinted twice. In 1947 a bulletin entitled, *Teaching as a Career*, was produced by the same author. More than 80,000 copies were sold. Because essential data have changed materially since 1947, the present bulletin has been written to describe the occupation as it was seen in March 1955.

The text of the current bulletin has been almost entirely rewritten. A few excerpts are taken from the 1947 bulletin, and from an article entitled, "Teaching Is an Attractive Career," by Earl W. Anderson, published in the November 1954 issue of *School Life*.

The manuscript was read critically by Hazel F. Gabbard, Gertrude M. Lewis, Helen K. Mackintosh, and Ellsworth Tompkins, all of the Office of Education. Revisions were made in line with their suggestions.

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# Teaching as a Career

## CHOOSING A VOCATION

**W**HEN A YOUNG PERSON chooses a vocation, his decision may determine how he will spend his working hours for more than 40 years. Even if he plans to follow this choice for only a few years, it could become his life work. The time required for him to explore thoroughly a possible vocational choice is very small in comparison to the years he will spend in the one he chooses. Therefore, he should not drift into his occupation without examining carefully all phases involved, such as his duties, his living conditions, his income, his leisure time, his opportunities for advancement, and above all, the satisfactions and annoyances in his work. Through careful study before entering an occupation, he should escape the bitterness of later finding himself prepared for and working in one job while yearning for another.

No vocation is equally attractive to any two people. Likes, dislikes, abilities, and background are all factors in determining whether a particular occupational choice will be a wise one. Each person should follow a vocation in which he thinks he will be able to achieve success and satisfaction in the long run.

In considering teaching as a life work, a young person should seek answers to the following questions:

- How important is teaching?
- What does a teacher do?
- What are the requirements for teaching? How may I meet them?
- How can I get satisfactory employment in teaching?
- What salary will I receive?
- What are the retirement provisions?
- Will I enjoy teaching?

Answers to these questions on teaching as a career are presented in this bulletin under the headings listed.

## HOW IMPORTANT IS TEACHING?

Good teaching is the key to national welfare. At present, most high-school graduates have spent from 1,500 to 2,000 days in school



under the guidance of teachers. College graduates have used almost 3,000 days in such learning experiences. Their strengths and weaknesses, their philosophies, attitudes, and skills, and their successes or failures depend to a great extent on the kinds of learning experiences which they have had. These learning experiences depended upon the kinds of teaching to which they were exposed. Their fundamental values were developed to a great extent in the schools, the quality depending on the instruction they received. A teacher who leads students to important growth, achievement, and satisfactions in learning is of immeasurable value to his students, community, State, and Nation.

Teachers are in charge of the most important natural resource of the Nation—its children and youth. The more advanced society becomes, the more it is dependent upon both fundamental elementary and specialized advanced instruction by teachers. Securing human improvement through learning is its greatest need.

The accumulated knowledge and experience of the human race is passed down from one generation to another largely through classroom teachers who constantly draw from the storehouse of the richest, finest, and best in human thinking and feeling. The teacher transmits the practical and technical knowledge and skills which have led to the material development of the modern world. He develops in his students an appreciation and love for the beautiful in the arts. He assists in the development of human thought.

#### THE EDUCATION PROGRAM IS TREMENDOUS

The people of the United States believe thoroughly in education and in the importance of schools. They spent 13 billion dollars for the year 1953-54 for school services, school buildings, and interest on debts for previously built structures. Even this large sum was not enough to meet adequately the needs of the schools for that year. Constant efforts are made to provide more money for teachers' salaries and for better housing and instructional facilities for the rapidly increasing numbers of students needing them.

In the year 1954-55, there were 38,000,000 students in public and private schools and colleges in the United States, taught by approximately 1,500,000 teachers. Public elementary and secondary school teachers were supervised by 60,000 principals and supervisors under the administration of 15,000 superintendents of schools and guided by 234,000 school board members. The 200,000 college staff members included 21,000 administrators. The number of elementary and secondary school pupils is increasing by approximately 1,500,000 a year.

Twenty-three percent of the entire population of the United States was enrolled in schools and colleges in 1955. This proportion will



almost certainly increase at least until the year 1960, as birthrates for the past 6 years were higher than for previous years. There are now not nearly enough elementary school teachers, or high-school teachers in some subjects, to meet the needs of the schools. The shortage almost certainly will soon include all high-school subjects and later will be found in almost all college fields.

### WHAT DOES A TEACHER DO?

#### DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORK IN TEACHING

A great variety of duties may be found in different teaching positions. The work ranges from teaching 3- and 4-year-old children in nursery schools to instructing advanced graduate students in universities. There are nursery and kindergarten teachers, elementary and secondary teachers, college teachers, and teachers in technical institutes. There are teachers of night classes for adult workers and teachers of slow learners, gifted children, socially and emotionally maladjusted pupils, the deaf, the blind, and the mentally and physically handicapped. Teaching physical education, industrial and home arts, home and family living, music, art, and trade programs is quite different from teaching mathematics or languages, or leading discussions in social studies.

A teacher is employed to help students learn. It is assumed that his relationships with his students will result in their growing and developing more rapidly than if he were not there. Usually the teacher works with pupils or students in groups, although learning is always individual. The teacher is assigned a particular grade, class, or group and is expected to relate his teaching to previous instruction of the students and to the work which they will have with later teachers.

In the teaching of some subjects, the teacher works with individual students one at a time; in others he guides a group as an organized unit. The social studies teacher normally talks with students more than the teacher of typing does, although the good social studies teacher increasingly puts the responsibility for class direction and class activities upon the students.

Teachers may lead their students to gain knowledge, understanding of processes, skill in activities, growth in ability to express themselves, facility in establishing better relationships with their classmates and teachers, and enjoyment in literature, music, creative art, or physical activities.

Detailed instructional duties of teachers that are fairly common to all classrooms are: Getting acquainted with each pupil, setting up aims for units of work, planning materials of instruction and methods of presenting them, helping pupils to meet difficulties in learning,



correcting written exercises, assigning work, teaching how to study, and testing pupil achievements.

Teaching activities differ considerably among the several grades and types of schools. In the nursery school, kindergarten, and other elementary grades, the teacher usually works with one group of pupils during the entire day; in the high school and in departmentalized instruction in the upper grades of the elementary school he commonly meets different groups of pupils during the school day. The work of the elementary school teacher covers a wide range of subjects and activities; that of the high-school teacher, one subject or sometimes two or three subjects and activities. Problems of classroom management differ with the age and maturity level of the students.

There is surprising variation in the duties of different teachers even in teaching the same subject or grade. Each works out what seems to him to be the best mixture of discussing and directing classwork, listening to problems, delegating responsibility, and evaluating progress during any day or week. Some plan in large units; others in small ones. Some lecture a great deal; others involve their students regularly in discussion. Most teachers have an opportunity to experiment with teaching methods and to vary their teaching programs even if the content is pretty well prescribed.

The good teacher constantly evaluates the progress of each of his students in group and individual situations. He also checks on the effectiveness of his methods and on the attitudes of his students towards their work, their teacher, and their fellow students. He selects new materials, searches for better ways of helping students to learn, or concentrates on helping slow learners without holding the bright ones back. He teaches by his actions, his attitudes, his chance remarks, his relationships to students, and sometimes by the way in which he conducts himself in the community.

Concerned as he must be with the welfare of his students, every good teacher plans carefully and almost continuously to make the best use of the time and facilities available to his students. Checking on the effectiveness of his instruction is really a part of his overall planning, which involves what he is to do and what his students are to do. He must constantly study and practice ways of working with students, other teachers, supervisors, and parents and other citizens as a means of advancing the learning of the students under his direction. This may involve examining records and student papers, attending meetings of parent-teacher groups, visiting homes, sponsoring out-of-school student activities, and working with students who need individual attention.



**DUTIES OF NURSERY SCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS**

In the nursery school and kindergarten, a teacher's daily work is likely to consist of some of the following activities:

- Having informal talks with parents before and after school
- Greeting children, teaching them to remove and care for wraps, and making them comfortable at play (sometimes alone and sometimes with others)
- Checking children for indications of illness
- Engaging them in an "activity" period, when children enjoy looking at books, painting, drawing, building, or dramatizing or exploring many materials
- Engaging them in music, art, rhythms, and "discussions" (in which children learn to talk, listen, plan, use numbers and colors, and many other things)
- Arranging for their lunch, rest, afternoon naps, and outdoor play periods
- Reading to children
- Taking children for a walk
- Preparing children to go home
- Recording observations about the children
- Planning and preparing the room for next day
- Meeting with the school staff or supervisors in a planning session

**DUTIES OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ABOVE KINDERGARTEN**

In the other classes of the elementary school, a teacher's daily work is likely to consist of some of the following activities:

- Greeting parents and children
- Checking children for signs of illness
- Planning the day's work with children (the teacher will have done some preplanning, but children will have a part)
- Conducting a "work" period, in which children carry out plans they have made, perhaps to study, discuss, write or produce plays, write stories or letters, make or decorate articles, or other activities
- Teaching reading, arithmetic, and spelling individually or in small groups
- Helping children improve in speaking and listening
- Teaching music, art, literature and social studies in ways which are interesting to children and which help them grow
- Taking a trip in relation to study
- Engaging in play (organized or free play)
- Recording observations about children
- Studying individual progress and analysing needs
- Selecting and securing materials
- Planning for the next day



Making long-range plans

Meeting with the Student Council on some problem which concerns the school

Evaluating and testing one's own methods and children's learning to see where improvement can be made

Engaging in planning conference with staff of school or supervisor

#### DUTIES OF HIGH-SCHOOL TEACHERS

The basic instructional duties of the high-school teacher are similar in many ways to those of the elementary school teacher, but the greater maturity of the high-school students requires differences in the teacher's procedures. High-school teachers' duties vary widely because of the difference in subjects they teach, such as physical education, music, fine arts, auto mechanics, English composition, bookkeeping, Latin, home economics, and algebra.

Most of the time of the high-school teacher is taken up with classroom teaching, lesson planning, keeping up to date in his subject-matter field, studying methods of teaching, grading papers, arranging for and carrying out class field trips, and counseling with students on school assignments or personal problems. A substantial number of teachers have charge of study halls for an hour a day. Teachers also direct plays; coach speech contestants, school athletic teams, or class teams; act as business manager for activities involving money; sponsor the Future Teachers Club, the science club, or Girl Scout groups; or chaperone groups attending festivals, contests, high-school day programs in colleges, or taking trips for other purposes.

Teachers in general find that student interest and achievement tend to be higher in electives than in required subjects. Many high-school teachers in foreign languages, physics, chemistry, advanced mathematics, industrial arts, business education, and home economics teach classes made up almost entirely of students who have elected those subjects.

#### DUTIES OF ADMINISTRATORS AND SUPERVISORS IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Administrators and supervisors are drawn from the teaching staff. They usually must have had from 5 to 10 years of successful teaching experience and at least 1 year's preparation beyond the requirements for the bachelor's degree. They must also have administrative ability.

The chief work of the general or special supervisor in elementary and secondary schools is to help teachers grow professionally. Through various ways, such as workshops, conferences, city- or county-wide groups, committees, and school-faculty projects, they help teachers learn to plan, to initiate, and to carry out improved learning



activities in their classrooms, and to evaluate their own success in achieving their professional goals. The supervisor opens the way for teachers to become well informed on the findings of research, to use and evaluate new materials and methods of instruction, to study the characteristics and records of ability and achievement of the students, and to have experience working with other leaders concerned with the problems of young people.

The principal is usually the immediate administrative authority to whom the teacher is responsible. Among many other duties, the principal often assists in the selection and assignment of teachers. He is generally responsible for helping the teacher help the students to learn effectively, for maintaining good relationships with parents, for the keeping of student records, and for the effective use of the school building and its equipment.

The superintendent is the general manager of the school system, responsible for the school's overall success or failure. He recommends to the board of education the employment, retention, promotion, and assignment of all personnel of the school system. He supervises management of business affairs, keeping of records, making of reports, operation and maintenance of school buildings and equipment, public relations, curriculum revision, and development of extensions of school services.

#### DUTIES OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Fundamentally, teachers and administrators in colleges and universities have the same basic duties and responsibilities as teachers and administrators in the elementary and secondary schools have. However, since college teachers deal with selected and more mature students, their instruction is in more specialized ideas and understandings than instruction is at the other levels. College instructors ordinarily do not have problems of student misbehavior in classrooms. They have charge of class groups about 15 hours a week, as compared to 25 hours for most high-school teachers and all-day-long classes for elementary teachers.

College instructors normally spend more time in classroom lecturing to clarify the ideas students gain from reading and to bring recent information to the students. The teacher of advanced students may spend much time with individual students, especially those working on individual problems in narrow fields of specialization, such as advanced experiments on the use of infra-red rays in physics, an evaluation of the effects of various anesthetics in medicine, or a study of the relative values of several different methods of teaching mathematics in education.



The college teacher normally spends more time in enlarging his own understanding of his subject, in keeping up to date with developments in his field, in research, in writing for publication, in lecturing to civic and professional groups, and in consultation services to business, industrial, scientific, and Governmental organizations than the elementary or secondary teacher does.

In colleges and universities, the president is responsible for the effective operation of the institution in somewhat the same fashion as the superintendent of schools is for his organization. In small institutions, the dean of the college supervises the faculty and curriculum matters, and the dean of students (dean of men or dean of women) is responsible for the supervision of student activities. The business manager looks after the business affairs and usually the operation of the college buildings and grounds. The registrar enrolls students and keeps records of their progress. In the larger institutions, vice presidents frequently assume the responsibilities mentioned above. Programs of a separate college within a university, such as the college of engineering or the college of arts and sciences, are administered by a dean of that college. The larger institutions may employ full-time directors of public relations, of adult education programs, of extension services, or of graduate placement.

### WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEACHING?

#### HOW MAY I MEET THEM?

Information on State and local requirements for teaching, specific college programs for preparing teachers, and scholarships provided for prospective teachers should be available from high-school counselors or administrators. Copies of State certification requirements and statements of State scholarship programs can be obtained upon request from the State department of education.

#### CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are certification requirements in all States of the Nation. They are rising steadily. General health certificates are required in 26 States. Seven States permit persons with 1 year of college preparation or less to enter permanent teaching in the public elementary schools, but 25 States require 4 years of preparation. For high-school teaching, 45 States require a bachelor's degree, and 3 States require 5 years above secondary school. Most States require public school administrators to have a master's degree.

Certificates are usually issued by the State department of education upon completion of required courses in recognized teacher education programs. In 10 States, certain county or city school officers,



or college officials, may issue certificates. Very few States recognize the certificates issued in other States, but all recognize prescribed courses taken in accredited colleges. Certificates usually are valid for from 3 years to life. Renewal usually is automatic for those teaching, but a few States require additional college work for renewal until specified preparation is gained.

In all States certification requirements for teaching in public elementary and secondary schools include specific courses in professional education. Almost all of these requirements include some experience in student teaching and classes in educational psychology and methods of teaching. In the majority of States the teacher must have had specific amounts of work in broad general courses, and the secondary school teacher must have had specific hours of course work in each subject for which he is to be certified.

#### CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND IN COLLEGES

In 1958, certification of teachers in private schools was required in only 4 States. Requirements of these schools often are similar to those of the public schools. Certification of college teachers is rarely required except in junior colleges in some States.

#### LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

Many public and private schools—especially in the larger cities—demand college graduation of all teachers and encourage graduate preparation through salary-schedule provisions. Many teachers go much beyond minimum local requirements.

Personal requirements for entering and remaining in teaching are mentioned in later discussions in this bulletin. In general, if a student can do creditable college work, is sound in body, mind, and character, and displays reasonable social intelligence, he has a good chance of meeting the minimum requirements of the profession. High standing and rapid advancement, however, usually demand superior abilities. Not only thorough knowledge of subject matter but also high intelligence, good judgment, and genuine interest in people are highly important in teaching.

School administrators seek young people who have had experience in student activities, and who have interest in young people and ability to direct their in-class and out-of-class activities effectively. They rate the ability to get along well with others very high. They also consider interest in other people, emotional stability, fairness, a high sense of values, a pleasing voice, industry, carefulness, cheerfulness, a sense of humor, openmindedness, and tact as important traits in teachers.



## PREPARING FOR TEACHING

Two out of every three colleges and universities in the Nation prepare elementary or secondary school teachers, or both. Graduates of State-approved curriculums in these institutions are eligible for teaching certificates without examination in the State approving the curriculum. Most of the nonpublic teacher education institutions and a few of the public ones will admit only those students who have good high-school grades and recommendation by the high-school principal. Some institutions require evidence of good personality traits.

In choosing an institution in which to prepare for teaching, students should consult catalogs and all other available sources of information freely. Months before registration time, they should investigate the general standing of the institution, its purposes, its reputation in teacher education, the quality and length of its program, and the cost of attendance. Advance reservations are usually necessary.

A prospective teacher is advised to enter an institution that is accredited by recognized and appropriate regional or national accrediting associations and approved by the State department of education of the State in which he plans to teach. The curriculums should be investigated carefully. He should be certain that upon graduation he can secure certification for the teaching he wishes to do in the State in which he wishes to teach. A college that has an excellent reputation in other fields may not maintain a strong program in a specialized area of teacher preparation in which the student is interested. College catalogs report the associations by which the colleges are accredited.

## INSERVICE EDUCATION

Possibly more than members of any other profession, teachers continue their schooling after they begin to work. Teachers who wish to raise the level of their certificates or to renew them; who wish to secure salary increase or other promotion, or who wish to keep abreast of the constant changes in education take additional college courses. These are frequently available in extension classes during evenings and Saturdays, in summer sessions, and other programs.

## COST OF PREPARATION

The expenses of college students vary greatly among the different institutions, according to location, size, reputation, and other characteristics. Usually expenses are lowest in public, tax-supported institutions. In 1954 the student costs per year in higher education averaged about \$1,200 with extremes of from \$300 in public junior colleges for students living at home to more than \$4,000 for free spenders attending high-tuition schools away from home.



**SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TEACHERS**

State scholarships for teacher education were available in 30 States in 1955. Many of them are loans that may be canceled by teaching a specified number of years (usually 2 to 4 years) in the State granting the scholarship. Parent-teacher groups and some other local civic organizations frequently award small scholarships for teacher preparation. Almost all colleges have loan funds and work opportunities available for their students. College authorities provide information on the costs of college education and scholarship, loan, and employment opportunities available.

**HOW CAN I GET SATISFACTORY EMPLOYMENT IN TEACHING?**

It has been noted earlier that there is a critical shortage of elementary school teachers, and of high-school and college teachers of mathematics, science, and technical subjects. Almost any high-school senior now planning to enter a teacher education program can be assured of employment as an elementary school, high-school, or college teacher by the time he can become well qualified for such a position, especially if he chooses his area of specialization carefully with the advice of college placement officers.

Elementary school enrollments continue to rise; high-school enrollments will soon rise, and college enrollments will almost double in the next 15 years. The number now preparing for public school teaching is not much more than half the approximately 150,000 new teachers that will be needed each year for the next 10 years. Colleges will face an equally serious shortage at a later date.

**SHORTAGE AND OVERSUPPLY OF TEACHERS**

In December of 1954 reports were received from 602 college placement officers (54 percent of all in the United States) indicating the areas or subjects in elementary and secondary school teaching in which they found a shortage of teachers, an oversupply, or an even balance between supply and demand. Table I lists the number reporting on each type of position and the percentages of those reporting who had found a shortage, an oversupply, or an even balance as of November 1954. Not all reported on any one type of position. Many colleges do not prepare teachers in all of the areas listed. Others had no graduates in some subjects in 1954. Every type of position was reported on by at least 180 placement officers. Opportunities in each type of position can be gauged by comparing the percentages in each row as they relate to that type of position.

One-third of 602 college placement officers reported in 1954 that all of their 1954 graduates prepared for teaching, who were available,



had secured teaching positions. Many others reported only one or two graduates unable to secure employment as teachers. Frequently unemployment came from poor college grades, too high specialization in a little taught subject, unwillingness to teach more than a few miles from home, too high salary demands, inability to make a good impression in interview, lack of salesmanship, advanced age, or, in a few cases, because of racial, social, religious, or other discriminations practiced by the employers of teachers.

TABLE I.—OPPORTUNITIES FOR EMPLOYMENT IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHING IN THE UNITED STATES, AS REPORTED BY 602 COLLEGE PLACEMENT OFFICERS IN DECEMBER OF 1934<sup>1</sup>

Type of position	Number of placement officers reporting	Percent reporting on supply of and demand for teachers		
		Shortage	Oversupply	Even balance
1	2	3	4	5
Nursery school.....	181	86	1	13
Kindergarten.....	291	95	0	5
Grades 1, 2, 3.....	443	96	1	3
Grades 4, 5, 6.....	407	93	1	7
Grades 7, 8.....	303	79	1	20
HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS				
Agriculture.....	195	76	7	17
Art.....	274	61	7	32
Biology.....	261	60	8	32
Chemistry.....	370	80	1	19
Commercial subjects.....	538	81	4	15
English.....	401	63	12	25
French.....	284	37	18	45
General science.....	337	68	3	29
German.....	209	26	23	51
Home economics.....	293	84	2	13
Industrial arts.....	244	70	6	25
Journalism.....	194	48	7	45
Latin.....	237	61	8	31
Mathematics.....	369	83	1	16
Music.....	348	82	3	15
Physical education:				
Men.....	312	34	27	39
Women.....	325	85	4	10
Physics.....	332	86	2	12
School librarian.....	378	94	0	6
Social science.....	384	20	27	53
Spanish.....	239	45	12	43
Speech.....	292	86	0	14

<sup>1</sup> Read Table I as follows: In the United States, of the placement officers reporting on nursery school teachers, 86 percent reported a shortage of teachers, 1 percent an oversupply, and 13 percent an even balance, etc.

From table I the following conclusions seem evident:

(1) There was a substantial shortage of teachers in nursery schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, grades 1 through 8, and in high schools in agriculture, chemistry, commercial subjects, home economics, mathematics, music, physical education for women, physics, and for school librarians. In all of these fields, shortage was reported by



more than 75 percent of the placement officers reporting on each type of position whereas oversupply was reported by 7 percent or less of the respondents.

(2) There was moderate shortage of teachers in art, biology, English, general science, industrial arts, Latin, and speech. Between 50 and 75 percent of the placement officers reported a shortage in these fields.

(3) The supply seemed about equal to the demand in French, German, journalism, physical education for men, social science, and Spanish. The proportion of placement officers reporting an oversupply was about the same as the proportion reporting a shortage.

(4) Only in social science was the percentage reporting oversupply (37) greater than the percentage reporting a shortage (29).

#### SELECTION PROCEDURES

The selection of teachers is usually under the supervision of the superintendent of schools, subject to general State regulations. Application should be made to him or to his personnel officer. Aside from such regulations, a teacher's employment depends upon his ability to convince the employer that he has "what it takes" to do a good job in the classroom in which the vacancy occurs. Evidence checked upon by employers includes grades made in college, experiences in group activities, and general recommendations covering ingenuity, enthusiasm, salesmanship, cooperativeness, energy, thoroughness, and sympathy for young people.

More positions are available for the beginner in rural than in urban areas. The large cities usually offer fewer possibilities for the beginner, since many of the experienced teachers from the small communities transfer to the large cities at the first opportunity.

#### EMPLOYMENT IN DISTANT PLACES

The greater the shortage of teachers, the easier it is for a teacher to get employment in a section a great distance from his home. The smaller the shortage, the more difficult it is for him to move out of his own region. This is because employers will hire teachers without interview only in unusual cases. In addition, travel costs make it necessary for the teaching position in a distant location to pay a higher salary in order to be more attractive than positions nearer home. People qualified in first-rate institutions with recognized programs for the preparation of teachers have little trouble in qualifying for certification in other parts of the country.

#### SERVICE OF COLLEGE-PLACEMENT OFFICERS

Almost every college preparing teachers has a placement officer who assists graduates into teaching positions by helping school officials



find teachers. Some colleges charge the teacher a small fee for this service; many offer it free. The placement officer interviews those wishing teaching positions, collects information and judgments about each for the use of employers, receives written and oral requests for help from school officials seeking teachers, and acts as a general go-between for the teacher and the employer. He may advise the teacher on the characteristics and desirability of the teaching position vacant, and the employer on the relative qualifications of several candidates for a vacancy to be filled.

Commercial teacher agencies are business enterprises engaged in finding jobs for teachers. Their usual fee is 5 percent of the first year's salary of the teacher in the position in which they place him. A few branches of the United States Employment Service place teachers. They charge no fee.

Because college-placement officers are close to the teacher supply-demand situation, they are of much help in advising prospective teachers on teaching as an occupation, possible choice of specialization, and opportunities for employment upon graduation from a teacher education program.

#### APPLICATIONS FOR POSITIONS

Most public school administrators welcome direct applications. Personnel directors handle such applications in the larger city schools. Administrators of small colleges sometimes welcome direct written or personal applications, but in the larger institutions direct applications are useless. Here the department chairman fills vacancies mostly through recommendations he solicits from heads of departments in universities in which college teachers are being prepared or from placement officers.

#### ADVANCEMENT IN TEACHING

Teachers may advance in salary according to a salary schedule in their districts, or by moving from a low paying to a higher paying community, usually to one with larger population. However, sometimes increased living costs in the better-paying district may be equal to or greater than increased salary payments received.

A small number of teachers secure employment as supervisors, principals, assistant superintendents, superintendents of schools, or other administrative officers. The duties of some of these officers are described on pages 6-7. Or they may move into college teaching.

As was noted earlier most supervisory and administrative positions require substantial amounts of successful classroom teaching experience, and college credit for at least a year of formal professional education beyond the first college degree. College teaching does not



require elementary or high-school teaching as a prerequisite, but frequently high-school teachers move into college positions after obtaining one or more years of graduate preparation.

### WHAT SALARY WILL I RECEIVE?

School districts vary widely in initial salaries paid, in the amounts of the annual increase, in the number of steps in the schedule, and in the additional amount paid teachers for additional college preparation. Most salary schedules provide for an automatic increase in salaries each year; a few schools determine the salary of each teacher on the basis of his teaching effectiveness.

#### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL SALARIES

The salaries for teaching are moderate. In 1955 the annual salaries for beginning teachers ranged from below \$2,500 in a few States to more than \$4,000 in others; the average was about \$3,000. Most school districts have salary schedules which provide for increases each year. The tops of these schedules, reached usually after 8-12 years, range from \$3,600 to \$9,000, with most schedules stopping near \$5,000. In most districts, elementary school teachers are paid the same salary as high-school teachers with the same qualifications. In general, the larger districts pay higher salaries than the smaller ones.

Table II reveals the average salaries of classroom teachers in each of the 48 States for the year 1954-55. It shows that average salaries in California and New York were more than double those in the lowest paying State. In the year 1954-55 the median<sup>1</sup> numbers of steps in salary schedules for teachers with bachelor's degrees, in large cities of the United States were: cities of more than 500,000 population, 12 annual steps averaging \$202 a step; cities of from 100,000 to 500,000 population, 13 steps averaging \$152 a step. In 1953-54 the median school in cities of from 30,000 to 100,000 in population had 13 steps on its schedule, averaging \$113 a step.

Table III shows median teacher salary schedules, by size of city, for the United States and for each of four regions. This indicates approximately what the average teacher received in that year. Many of the large school district schedules provide for the payment of an additional \$300 to \$500 to teachers with a year's college preparation beyond the master's degree, and another \$200 to \$500 to those holding the doctor's degree.

#### SALARIES IN PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHING AND OTHER OCCUPATIONS

For the year 1952 the National Education Association reported average annual earnings for several groups of workers as follows:

<sup>1</sup> The median is the middle number when counting from one extreme to the other extreme in a distribution of numbers on a scale.



teachers \$3,430; all persons working for wages or salaries \$3,428; employees in manufacturing \$3,833; civilian employees of the Federal Government \$3,950; and, for the previous year, dentists \$7,820, lawyers \$8,730, and physicians \$13,482.

TABLE II.—AVERAGE SALARIES OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS, 1954-55<sup>1</sup>

State	Salary	State	Salary
Continental U. S.	\$3,510	Nebraska	\$2,900
Alabama	\$2,500	Nevada	4,074
Arizona	4,150	New Hampshire	3,800
Arkansas	2,185	New Jersey	4,300
California	4,025	New Mexico	4,540
Colorado	3,530	New York	4,900
Connecticut	4,200	North Carolina	3,225
Delaware	4,230	North Dakota	2,900
Florida	3,725	Ohio	3,975
Georgia	2,875	Oklahoma	3,445
Idaho	3,424	Oregon	4,180
Illinois	4,500	Pennsylvania	4,020
Indiana	4,100	Rhode Island	4,025
Iowa	3,100	South Carolina	2,903
Kansas	3,330	South Dakota	2,900
Kentucky	3,475	Tennessee	2,710
Louisiana	3,600	Texas	3,843
Maine	2,800	Utah	3,800
Maryland	4,147	Vermont	2,800
Massachusetts	4,045	Virginia	3,130
Michigan	4,370	Washington	4,310
Minnesota	3,500	West Virginia	2,975
Mississippi	2,000	Wisconsin	3,722
Missouri	3,255	Wyoming	3,475
Montana	3,575		

<sup>1</sup> Estimated by the National Education Association Research Division.

NOTE: In recent years average salaries have been increasing at the rate of 5 percent a year.

SOURCE: *Advance Estimates of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools for the School Year 1954-55*, Washington, D. C., National Education Association, November 1954.

TABLE III.—MEDIAN TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULES, BY REGION AND SIZE OF CITY, SCHOOL YEAR 1953-54<sup>1</sup>

Region	Degree	Population category of cities <sup>2</sup>									
		I (100,000 & over)		II (50,000- 99,999)		III (10,000- 29,999)		IV (5,000- 9,999)		V (2,500- 4,999)	
		Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum	Mini- mum	Maxi- mum
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
UNITED STATES	Bachelor's	\$2,061	\$3,040	\$2,025	\$4,075	\$2,000	\$4,400	\$2,025	\$4,217	\$2,000	\$3,000
	Master's	3,231	5,300	3,244	5,017	3,070	4,800	2,983	4,400	2,120	4,167
MIDWEST	Bachelor's	2,200	5,100	2,000	4,000	2,023	4,235	2,000	4,200	2,000	4,100
	Master's	3,300	5,500	3,255	5,000	2,204	4,500	2,200	4,475	2,168	4,540
EAST	Bachelor's	2,000	5,010	2,000	4,800	2,700	4,800	2,400	4,125	2,700	4,300
	Master's	3,120	5,400	3,000	5,200	2,900	5,000	2,875	4,300	2,900	4,600
SOUTH	Bachelor's	2,013	3,025	2,000	3,500	2,000	3,677	2,001	3,730	2,174	3,404
	Master's	2,843	4,297	2,000	3,900	2,605	3,800	2,600	3,604	2,437	3,500
WEST	Bachelor's	2,000	5,100	2,250	4,900	2,200	4,000	2,200	4,475	2,100	3,900
	Master's	3,575	5,300	3,530	5,000	3,000	5,000	3,400	4,800	3,200	4,100

<sup>1</sup> SOURCE: *A Survey of Teacher Salary Schedules*, Chicago, The Education Department, Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, May 1954, 16 p.

<sup>2</sup> Cities classified according to 1950 Census.

**ADMINISTRATORS' SALARIES**

High-school principals in larger schools receive salaries from \$5,000 to above \$10,000 a year. Superintendents of schools receive from \$8,000 in some of the medium-sized cities to \$25,000 or more in a few large ones. In the United States in 1954-55 the median annual salaries of superintendents of schools in cities with population of more than 500,000 were \$20,000; in those of from 100,000 to 500,000, \$16,130.

**COLLEGE TEACHERS' SALARIES**

Usually colleges pay top salaries considerably higher than those found in public schools for teachers with the doctor's degree or its equivalent (8 years beyond the bachelor's degree). Smaller and financially weak colleges frequently pay lower salaries than better public schools do.

The Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors reports instructional salaries in 40 selected colleges and universities for the year 1953-54. These salaries ranged from \$2,300 to \$3,500 for beginning teachers (undoubtedly some with master's and some with doctor's degrees) and maximum salaries from \$6,000 to \$17,200. At least 7 institutions paid maximums of more than \$10,000.

A report by the National Education Association reveals that for the year 1952-53 the salaries of 417 colleges and universities ranged from medians of between \$3,083 to \$3,317 for beginning teachers to median top salaries between \$6,450 and \$7,600. Eighteen institutions reported median top salaries between \$10,000 and \$17,999 for experienced teachers. Administrative officers' salaries in many schools were from \$6,500 to \$23,000 for that year. Salaries in higher education have been raised from 5 to 10 percent during the past 2 years.

**WHAT ARE THE RETIREMENT PROVISIONS FOR TEACHERS?**

All public school and most nonpublic school teachers are protected by retirement programs. These programs are usually supported by annual payments of from 2 to 7 percent of the teacher's salary, matched by an equal payment by his employer. A teacher's annual retirement allowance in the better systems is in direct proportion to the total amount that has been paid into the system for him at the time of his retirement. For teachers who have paid into the fund for 30 or more years, the annual retirement income range from less than \$100 a month to two-thirds of the last teaching salary income, depending upon the age of retirement, the number of years of payments into the fund, and the amounts paid into the fund by the teacher and by his employing board. In 8 States, in 1954, all public school teachers were covered by the Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance,



commonly referred to as "social security." In most of these States, the teachers were in State retirement systems also.

Increasingly retirement programs are adding death and disability insurance features and provisions for splitting retirement agreements to protect both a teacher and his wife, or even his children if he dies shortly after he retires. Many State laws also provide for protection from loss due to injury while on duty through workmen's compensation laws. Group life, health, or accident insurance programs are wholly or partly financed by some schools.

Very little retirement credit in one State may be used toward retirement under another State system. Efforts are being made for more reciprocity. "Social security" credit may be transferred upon employment to any school under that system. Credit in the Teachers' Retirement and Annuity Association (a nonprofit company handling retirement programs for about 500 colleges and private schools) may also be transferred to any school that is a member of that program.

In most retirement programs the teacher may retire because of illness, or after some 30 years of teaching service, at about 55 years of age, or even earlier. State compulsory retirement ages range from 65 to 70.

### WILL I ENJOY TEACHING?

As was noted earlier, what attracts one person in teaching may be unattractive to another, but there are certain likes and abilities which most teachers must have to be happy in their work. The person who does not have these will probably find teaching unsatisfactory. These likes and abilities are:

- (1) Enjoyment in being with people and in doing things for them.
- (2) Tolerance and patience with others, especially with those who are slow in understanding one's ideas and in following them, and with people whose ideas differ from one's own.
- (3) Skill in working cooperatively with others and in getting others to work cooperatively with him.
- (4) Enthusiasm in guiding young folks to explore new fields and to unlock the doors to knowledge.
- (5) Physical health and energy so that the demands of young people can be met without producing continuous fatigue.
- (6) Ability to take suggestions from others and to follow and use them wisely.
- (7) Facility in comprehending a large unit of work or thought, and in planning (cooperatively if possible) methods of helping young people to undertake it.
- (8) Enjoyment in books and in reading.
- (9) Interest in discovering and trying out new ways of doing things with learners.



(10) Ability and willingness to determine how well students are progressing.

(11) Understanding that the important thing in teaching is what *each student* is doing rather than what the teacher is doing.

(12) Realization that knowledge is important to people only as it makes a difference in their lives.

An excellent way for a student to discover some of the satisfactions and annoyances he may find in teaching is to work as a leader with groups of boys and girls. Teaching a Sunday school class, counseling in a summer camp, supervising playground activities, and assisting a classroom teacher in his work should aid him in deciding whether he wants to prepare for teaching. The judgments of teachers, friends, and relatives should also assist him in determining his vocational choice.

In general, the phases of teaching which are attractive to most people are job security; the chance to work with young people and to help them grow, the respect shown teachers, and the warm appreciation of some students and of their parents for the assistance given them. Teachers appreciate the relatively short hours on the job, the summer vacations that are much longer than those common in other major vocations, and the stimulation of dealing with knowledge, ideas, books, and other opportunities for self-improvement.

Although teachers as a group impose long hours of work upon themselves in order to accomplish their aims, the specific hours when they are tied down are fewer than in most other vocations. Teaching usually offers clean, comfortable, and attractive working conditions; friendly coworkers; and participation in a cooperative social undertaking for improving the Nation. Many teachers prize the chance to manage their own classrooms and to experiment with different methods of helping boys and girls learn.

In the main, teaching will be attractive to a person who likes people and likes to do things for them; who is comfortable in dealing with people in a cooperative relationship; who finds pleasure in sharing new experiences with boys and girls; who can get people to work with him enthusiastically; who enjoys planning his work thoroughly step by step; and who likes books and reading.

Usually the person who is well prepared for teaching in one State has no trouble in meeting certification requirements and in securing employment in another. The well-prepared teacher can usually obtain temporary certification in any State while he prepares to meet unusual requirements. Of course, a teacher with only a bachelor's degree cannot be certified for high-school teaching in a State requiring the master's degree.



## CONCLUSION

For many, teaching is an attractive life of warm and deep satisfactions. For others it could be dismal drudgery. In considering fitness for teaching, liking for it, and chances of success and happiness in it, a young person should get all possible help from school and college counselors, friends, relatives, experiences in helping children and youth, and written information available. Then he should make his decision in terms of his own life values.

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